

Vice President, active in the Republican Party and Republican leadership—she talks about the Putin wing of the Republican Party.

Again, I am not saying that she includes the Senator from Texas in that category. I don't know if she does or she doesn't. I didn't hear her mention names, but I do know that she thinks that a number of Republicans are part of this Putin wing of the Republican Party, and it is despicable, but it is true, and it is disappointing to all of us.

And I would add, too, that the Senator from Texas, maybe he missed the news as he was talking about chips, computer chips, about semiconductors. Intel made a huge announcement that they are coming to Ohio. They are going to invest billions of dollars. They are going to hire 5,000 building tradespeople—5,000 tradespeople—over a 10-year period to build these fabs. Imagine the size of that. I have never seen anything like that.

So I am excited about what we are doing, and that is why it is so important what Senator WYDEN and I and others are doing on making sure that we pass the USICA—the Innovation and Competition Act. It is so important to our country. It is so important to workers. We are finally putting workers at the center of our economic policy, and that is a thrill.

And as President Biden said on the Senate floor, we are finally burying the term “Rust Belt.” We are burying it in Columbus with Intel. We are burying it in Northwest Ohio with solar manufacturing. We are burying it in Southwest Ohio with a new generation of jet fuel and jet engines. We are burying it in Cleveland with what we are doing with NASA. We are burying it in Youngstown with our manufacturing camps and all that we are doing for America Works.

Mr. CRUZ. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. BROWN. Sure.

Mr. CRUZ. Just a moment ago, the Senator from Ohio made reference to the alleged existence of the so-called Putin wing of the Republican Party.

I would like to ask the Senator from Ohio, Is it accurate that the Senator from Ohio and 43 of his Democratic colleagues in January of this year voted against sanctioning Nord Stream 2, sanctioning Russia, sanctioning Putin, despite the fact that Ukraine begged the Senate to pass those sanctions and Putin invaded Ukraine just days after 44 Democrats sided with Russia and Putin?

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I take back my time.

I have heard no Democrat talk about—I have heard nobody talk about the Putin wing of the Democratic Party. No Democrat believes that.

I hear just down the hall 100 yards, Congresswoman CHENEY talk about the Putin wing of the Republican Party. I am not in intraparty fights; I am only pointing that out.

I want to get to this. We expect a vote soon after 6, and I want to get back to my remarks. I appreciate the engagement of Senator CRUZ on this issue

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Madam President, we honor during Police Week the law enforcement officials in our State who made the ultimate sacrifice.

This year, we will add to the National Law Enforcement Memorial the names of 10 Ohioans who laid down their lives last year: Officer Brandon Stalker, Deputy Donald Gilreath III, Natural Resources Officer Jason Lagore, Officer Scott Dawley, Deputy Sheriff Robert Craig Mills, Deputy Sheriff Boyd Blake, Corrections Lieutenant David Reynolds, Corrections Officer Joshua Kristek, Patrolman Sean VanDenberg, and Officer Shane Bartek. Each of these losses is a tragedy for a family, for a community, for all of law enforcement officials in this country.

We know in too many places right now the trust between law enforcement and the community is too often frayed or broken.

These Ohio lives are a reminder of the ideals we strive for—women and men who are true public servants in the best sense of the word, people who give themselves to their communities, and these Ohioans gave so much.

Let me mention each one briefly.

Officer Brandon Stalker, a 24-year-old father of two young children, devoted to his fiancée. His first partner, Officer Brent Kieffer, said he had a “constant smile and unfailing sense of humor.”

He added that “[e]very single day we went on patrol, Brandon was all about trying to serve the community. He truly wanted to make the community a better place.”

That comes from his patrol colleague.

Before joining the force, the Toledo native coached baseball at his former high school and was passionate about mentoring young players.

He gave his life last January protecting his community.

Officer Stalker, rest in peace.

Natural Resources Officer Jason Lagore was a Chillicothe native, devoted husband, and father of two sons. Those who knew him talked about his love of his job and commitment to helping people.

When he joined the Department of Natural Resources in 2005, he persuaded his bosses to let him bring in and train Ranger, his first K-9 partner.

Over the years, he grew the program, showing that department how successful K-9 teams could be. The department now has K-9 units all across the State. Lieutenant Hoffer watched his friend build the program from the ground up. He said of Officer Lagore:

He did it all himself, and we couldn't have had a better person. He was patient, a good all-around person, a good officer, and he knew what he was doing.

Last February, Officer Lagore and his K-9 partner Sarge were helping

with a search operation at Rocky Fork State Park in Highland County, southwest of Columbus, when he suffered a heart attack and fell into a lake. He was 36 years old.

Ohio Department of National Resources posthumously honored him with the Director's Award of Valor. Director Mertz said:

Because of his courage and bravery in the face of danger, there is no one more deserving of this honor.

Rest in peace, Officer Labore.

Officer Scott Dawley served his hometown of Nelsonville near Athens, a small tight-knit community. His death last August in a three-vehicle crash responding to a call was felt across town.

One lifelong resident said of Officer Dawley:

He loved his community, and the community loved him back. The outpouring of grief and support was overwhelming.

He had just gotten married in April, making a blended family of nine.

He was a devoted father. He coached his son's baseball team. His wife Marissa said one of her happiest memories was watching her 9-year-old daughter give Officer Dawley a makeover, complete with finger and toenail polish.

Officer Dawley, rest in peace.

Officer Shane Bartek was 25 years old when he was killed during a carjacking at a West Side apartment complex not too far from my house on New Year's Eve, just 28 months after he joined the Cleveland Division of Police.

His family said that from a young age, he always wanted to be an officer. His greatest aspiration was to become a detective.

His twin sister Summer talked about how Officer Bartek loved to participate in the annual “shop with a cop” event during the holiday season, allowing a child who has been touched by law enforcement to buy and give Christmas presents to that family.

One colleague said:

He would tell me how much he wanted to touch other people's lives so he could actually make an impact. And he did that.

Officer Bartek, rest in peace.

Last year, we also lost six officers to COVID-19: Deputy Gilreath, Deputy Sheriff Mills, Deputy Sheriff Blake, Corrections Lieutenant Reynolds, Corrections Officer Kristek, and Patrolman VanDenberg.

While many of us were still social distancing and working from home, police officers, like other essential workers—grocery store workers, nurses, technicians, food service people, all on the frontline of our community, all essential workers, even though many were not paid like it—risked their own health to keep our communities safe.

We can't begin to repay the debt we owe these officers and their families.

We can work to better support officers in the communities they swear an oath to protect.

It is why I am working with colleagues of both parties on legislation to support them as they do their jobs.

I joined my colleague Senator GRASSLEY to introduce the Fighting Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Act. It would increase mental health support for police, fire, emergency medical, and 9-1-1 personnel as they cope with the stress of responding to crisis situations.

These Ohioans deal with some of the most tense and life-threatening situations in our communities—car accidents, fires, family disputes, people in mental health crises.

So often our local police and fire departments don't have the resources to offer comprehensive mental health support. The Grassley-Brown bill will help us do that.

I also introduced the Expanding Health Care Options for Early Retirees Act, a bill that would allow retired police officers and other first responders to buy into Medicare beginning at age 50.

Police officers and other first responders wear their bodies out protecting our families and communities. They should have access to affordable healthcare when their service comes to an end.

This simple solution would ensure access to healthcare for police officers who are forced to retire but aren't yet eligible for Medicare.

I am working across the aisle with Senator THUNE and others to fix outdated IRS rules that prevent public safety officers from making tax-free withdrawals from retirement accounts to cover healthcare premiums.

We need to make sure police and fire can retire with dignity. Part of dignity of work is retiring with dignity. At the very least, that means they should be able to afford the healthcare they need.

This Police Week, let's offer more than empty words. Let's honor the memories of these women, these men who laid down their lives in service of their communities by getting their fellow officers the tools they need, the training they need to do their jobs and to build trust with the communities they are sworn to protect.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the scheduled vote be called immediately.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON WATSON NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Watson nomination?

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) would have voted "nay."

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 186 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Padilla
Bennet	Hassan	Peters
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Blunt	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Booker	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Burr	Kelly	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Sinema
Cardin	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Lujan	Tester
Collins	Manchin	Warner
Coons	Markey	Warnock
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warren
Duckworth	Murphy	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Feinstein	Ossoff	

NAYS—45

Barrasso	Hagerty	Portman
Blackburn	Hawley	Risch
Boozman	Hoeben	Romney
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Capito	Inhofe	Rubio
Cassidy	Johnson	Sasse
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lankford	Scott (SC)
Crapo	Lee	Shelby
Cruz	Lummis	Thune
Daines	Marshall	Tillis
Ernst	McConnell	Toomey
Fischer	Moran	Tuberville
Graham	Murkowski	Wicker
Grassley	Paul	Young

NOT VOTING—5

Cramer	Rosen	Van Hollen
Menendez	Sullivan	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the Thompson nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Trina L. Thompson, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

VOTE ON THOMPSON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Thompson nomination?

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) would have voted "No."

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 187 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Baldwin	Hassan	Ossoff
Bennet	Heinrich	Padilla
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Peters
Booker	Hirono	Reed
Brown	Kaine	Sanders
Cantwell	Kelly	Schatz
Cardin	King	Schumer
Carper	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Casey	Leahy	Sinema
Collins	Lujan	Smith
Coons	Manchin	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Markey	Tester
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warnock
Feinstein	Murkowski	Warren
Gillibrand	Murphy	Whitehouse
Graham	Murray	Wyden

NAYS—44

Barrasso	Hagerty	Risch
Blackburn	Hawley	Romney
Boozman	Hoeben	Rounds
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Burr	Inhofe	Sasse
Capito	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Lankford	Shelby
Cotton	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Marshall	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Ernst	Moran	Tuberville
Fischer	Paul	Wicker
Grassley	Portman	

NOT VOTING—5

Blunt	Rosen	Young
Cramer	Van Hollen	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). The clerk will report the Sykes nomination.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Sunshine Suzanne Sykes, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

VOTE ON SYKES NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Sykes nomination?

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.